

Coming Soon! To a Storm Drain Near You!

Fairfax County Storm Drain Marking Program

Why mark storm drains?

Storm drains prevent flooding of roads and neighborhoods by carrying rain and snowmelt away from streets and sidewalks. Unlike water from our taps and tub, water flowing into storm drains is not treated. **Storm drains connect directly to our streams.** Trash, pet waste, motor oil, paint and other materials dumped or washed into storm drains pollute Accotink Creek and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Markers on each storm drain remind all of us to keep storm drains and our streams clean.

What can you do to protect your local stream and Bay?

✓ **Volunteer to lead a storm drain marking project in your neighborhood.** Contact the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District at **703-324-1423, TTY 711** or **conservationdistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov** to get started. We supply the materials, you supply the legwork. Together we educate our communities about the connection between our storm drains and our streams.



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- ✓ **Make sure nothing goes down the storm drain except water.** Adopt your local storm drain and keep it clear of trash and debris, dispose of pet waste in your trash can or toilet, and recycle used motor oil at your local gas station.
- ✓ **Practice Bay-friendly lawn care.** Check the forecast before applying chemicals, including fertilizers, to your lawn, and compost yard debris. Try using Virginia native plants to reduce your garden's chemical needs.
- ✓ **Report storm drain dumping.** For hazardous substances like pesticides and paint, contact Fairfax County Fire and Rescue at 703-691-2131, TTY 711. Report dumping of non-hazardous materials such as pet waste to the Health Department at 703-246-2300, TTY 711.
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Storm Drain Education: Step by Step

Guidelines for Storm Drain Projects in Fairfax County

1. **Contact** the **Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District** at 703-324-1423, TTY 711 or conservationdistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov to set up a volunteer orientation meeting and get your project started.

2. We will help you **locate** the storm drains in your neighborhood, and find out whether they are privately (by an HOA) or publicly (by VDOT) maintained.

3. Get approval for your project from your local HOA and a **permit** for your project from VDOT (if required).

4. Develop a storm drain education flier or use our standard educational materials to hand out to the homes in your project area. Think about other ways you might **spread the word** about the connection between the storm drain and our streams such as writing an article for your school, church or neighborhood publication or contacting the local newspaper.

5. **Get organized!** Set a date for labeling or stenciling the storm drains. Recruit others in your group or your friends and family to help you with your project, and make sure you have the supplies you need. Think about keeping yourself and your fellow volunteers happy and safe! Safety gloves and vests are always a good idea, as are snacks and drinks at the end of the day.



*Photograph courtesy of
Northern Virginia Regional Commission*

6. **Label the drains!** Make sure to take pictures to send to NVSWCD to help publicize this program. Send in marked maps to NVSWCD and VDOT. Report the number of homes educated and drains labeled.

7. **Be proud** of the efforts you and your group have made to keep Fairfax County's streams and the Chesapeake Bay clean for us and for wildlife!